

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed August 29, 2006, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner reconsider the above-captioned application in view of the following amendments and remarks.

Claims 1-20 were pending in this application. Claims 1, 4, 5, 14-17 and 20 are allowed. Claims 2, 3, 6, and 7 were rejected, but have been amended to overcome the Examiner's rejection. Claims 8-13 were withdrawn under a species restriction requirement, but now depend from a generic linking claim (Claim 1). Accordingly, Applicant requests that claims 8-13 be reinstated and allowed in original form. Claims 18 and 19 have been cancelled.

Rejection of Claims 2-3 and 6-7 under 35 U.S.C. 112

The Examiner has rejected Claims 2-3 and 6-7 under 35 U.S.C. 112, Second Paragraph, as being indefinite. In particular, the examiner asserts that the step of machining makes it unclear as to which machining step is being referred to, i.e. helical grooves or forming a tubular configuration.

Claims 2-3 have been amended to clearly indicate that the machining step in these claims refers to machining the ceramic material blank into the tubular configuration. Claims 6-7 have been amended to clearly indicate that the machining step in these claims refers to machining of helical grooves.

Applicant respectfully asserts that Claims 2-3 and 6-7 are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the Examiner remove his rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. 112, Second Paragraph .

Examination of Claims Previously Withdrawn

Claims 8-13 were withdrawn under a species restriction requirement, but now depend from a generic linking claim (Claim 1). Accordingly, Applicant respectfully asserts that Claims 8-13 are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests that these claims be allowed in original form.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1, 4, 5, 14-17 and 20 have been allowed. Applicant thanks the Examiner for this favorable response.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, Applicant respectfully asserts that the present application is now fully in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested. If any issues remain that may be addressed by a phone conversation, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the phone number listed below.

No additional fee is thought to be necessary to enter this Amendment and Response. If an additional fee is required, the Examiner is authorized to charge the Applicants' Deposit Account - Account Number 10-0750/BIO-5020NP.

Respectfully submitted,

/Vincent J. Serrao/

Vincent J. Serrao
Reg. No.: 47,072
Attorney for Applicant

Johnson & Johnson
One Johnson & Johnson Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08933-7003
(732) 524-1163
November 28, 2006